

Extreme
Field Notes

Back at the Ranch:
Warming Up

Chapter 3

With
Field Reporter
Juliana Coles

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Warming Up

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Chapter 3
Booklet 4

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RIP**



Summary of Tasks pg.15

In Chapter 2 of "Extreme Field Notes" we took our Journal Mobile Units out into the Wild Blue Yonder and lived to tell the tale of it in our Sketchbook Journal. As we enter a season of rainy days and Mondays Chapter 3 provides us with a warm up to in-depth Extreme Visual Journaling assignments to take our journal pages where we left off in the field and develop them into something more meaningful.

BACK AT THE RANCH

Maybe the weather has taken on a chill, or the sky has become gray and stormy. For most of us, the moment has arrived to withdraw into the comfort and safety of our homes and studios. Our work in the field is not over, but changes, as does the weather and seasons, as do we. We purposefully slow down and turn inward. It is now time to harvest our incredible work from the summer of Field Trips.

From Reporter in the Field to Extreme Journalist

We began our work in the field by taking notes and playing. We discovered that doing our inner work in public, while on vacation, on the road, or on location is not so easy and far too intense. On these rainy days and Mondays, we expand on these notes from the Field by reworking and more fully developing our pages from those random collage items gathered in the field, the incomplete doodles, vague, kooky, fun, playful, gestural sketches and written notes to create a solid foundation for expressing our personal mythology: the legendary tales of ourselves. Let's return to the studio for further and deeper exploration...

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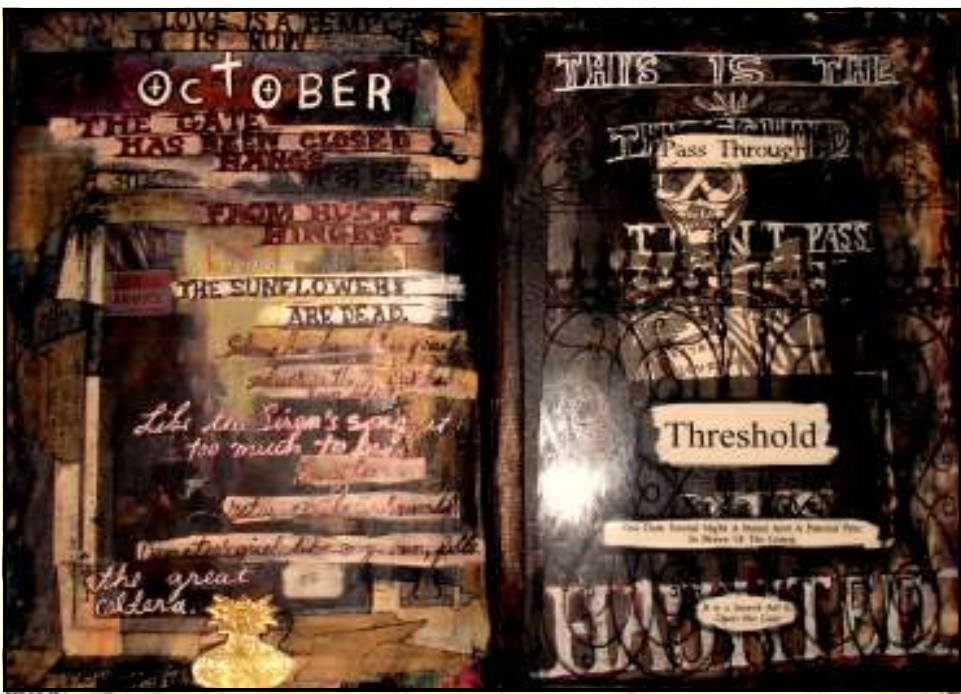


THE BREAK - UP

Hey wait a minute- don't go breaking up your Journal Mobile Unit just yet. It still needs to be ready or handy at all times. I know that summer is over, but that doesn't mean you end your Field Notes Field Trips. Maintain your practice of meeting the Self (which is really what you were doing all along, wasn't it?). Remember your All Weather/All Terrain gear? No sleet nor snow nor wind nor rain should stop you entirely. I encourage you to find a way to dismantle or reorganize your JMU that will be easy to put back together so that in an instant or if an opportunity arises, you are ready to go. There are still adjustments you can make and new Journal Mobile Units to put together. Like from studio to living room, a tray or basket may work better. I have a lot of stuff and typically, but not for all things, I have enough to have my supplies available on my desk, as well as within my Journal Mobile Unit, which may be something to think about.

Maintenance

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(For working on dark pages, check out my "Book of the Night" online workshop now!)

THE MIXED MEDIA ARSEENAL

You probably have all of these supplies in your Journal Mobile Unit, or at least in your studio Mixed Media Arsenal. And I know you have tons more stuff in your studio that you never even included in your JMU, but there are some basic items we will be using in our Extreme Journaling assignments, so please go through your materials and make sure you have them. You can always improvise, but I think most of these materials are good to have on hand. As I said you may have most of these items, if not, it's time for another field trip to an art store. It certainly won't hurt to have doubles or extras, or to purchase those items you have heard your fellow journalists talk so much about. As a matter of fact, it's an assignment. Look through the tribal council discussions and pick a style, method, or some materials that you would like to try out or practice and purchase these items as a gift to yourself.

Supplied



Studio Supply List

- #1 Item: see next page. You cannot begin without it...
- And you will need a timer...
- Gluesticks (2 big ones - don't bother with the little ones)
- Scissors
- Acrylic paints: at least one light, one dark, and 1 black, 1 white.
- brushes in at least three different thicknesses (crappy is fine)
- 1 quarter inch brush (relative good quality - no frayed edges or wispy.)
- rubberstamp letters (any size) & stamp pad (I prefer Staz On Brand because they work on top of everything , even glass, and won't smear once dry and dry fairly quickly, depending on the surface you are printing on.
- 2 brush markers in any color
- 1 black permanent marker
- 1 white poster paint marker (or other tool that can write on dark surfaces)
- 1 graphite pencil, 6B, Ebony, or graphite stick
- a coupla colored pencils; at least one pastel, light, or white writing pen (nothin' fancy)
- 2 different masking tapes in different colors/thicknesses (you may want some transparent tape, but not necessary)
- 1 white china marker or grease pencil
- 1 watercolor crayon in any color (no black)
- collage items: 1 magazine to cut up, 1 poetry book to cut up, any random collage items

And everything else you love and would like to play with...



It's In the Mix

shadowy darkness all around us,
whispering softly in the breeze,

Your #1 Necessary Item Do not begin without this:

Wet Wipes: I recommend Wet Ones Brand Wipes, or any other wipe with alcohol. These are great for clean up, but we use them for our first assignment, so you will definitely need a container! You will find you can't live without them. You can use Moist wipes, antibacterial wipes, clean up wipes- all will work. And get a big container- I use them for everything. I wipe up excess glue, I use them to dampen paper or pages for better adhesion, I blend materials, I wipe off things I don't like, I keep my hands clean, I keep my scissors clean, in a pinch I can clean a brush if I don't have water, and then I lay them out when I am done and when they are dry I use them as rags. There are a million and one handy uses for these, but for our extreme visual journaling explorations, they will become our tool for self discovery...You cannot start this first assignment without them, so head out now! Target and Equate have their own generic brands, but I don't like them as much. Everyone will have different preferences, so be sure you try different brands...

TRIBAL COUNCIL: Having worked your ass off, in so many new and interesting ways while utilizing new materials and techniques on varying surfaces and outdoor weather conditions, you have made brilliant discoveries about what works for you and what doesn't. You even learned that what you thought you loved - you don't, and what you didn't care for, you now love. So now, what are some of your NEW favorite mixed media supplies and why? And you can tell us what didn't work for you as well - we continue to learn from each other and notice our differences. If we understand what works for someone, and we feel confused because we didn't like that particular tool, we can refer to their drawings- ah yes, she has a heavier hand than I do, I see why that won't work for me. Or you may notice that she uses her tools in a different way, so maybe you can try that method, and give up on the thing that doesn't work for you, even though everyone else seems to love it. Who cares. Stand by your hand; use it, get to know it, learn to love it.

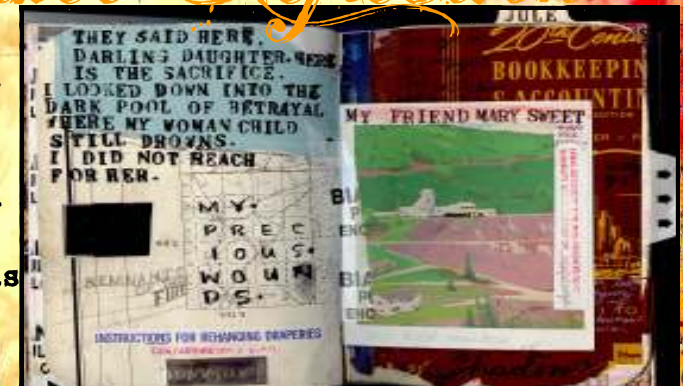
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ONGOING BOOK PREPARATION:

Don't cut or tear anything out in terms of things you don't like. Everything is something and we can and will use it as we turn inward in the studio and rework and expand upon our sketches from the field. Before you go forward, I would like you to spend some time with your book. Do you think you need more pages? Less? Are your pages too thin, do you need more structure? Is there paper you would like to try? You don't have to do anything now, just begin to get an idea of the path of your book. You may know exactly what to do, you may have no clue. You may get ideas as you flip through your pages. If you don't know what to do or don't feel inspired, then just wait. It's not time yet. Don't try to make a pretty book or even designate a theme. We have much more work to do, and everything can change.... and whatever changes you do make, please let us know in the Tribal Council! Also remember to date everything, including the year!

Further Reflection

Our quick sketches will be used for further reflection when we bring the outdoors in as the seasons change



Changing

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WARM UP: (SEE VIDEO)

BOOK PAGES: Open Your books to any two pages. I want you to work right on top of a journal writing page (feel free to do one especially for this!) or a simple sketch that didn't quite work out. Whatever you choose it will become completely obliterated, so don't use anything you could potentially rework or that you are attached to. How will you know what to save and what to let go? I don't have a definition for that, so you will have to respond to your intuition and trust that it will choose exactly what you need. Then let it go...

SUPPLIES: Make sure you have all the supplies and collage items I listed, and more, set up around you in a horseshoe shape so that it is easily accessible. You do not want to get up. What we need to do is loosen up. Dancers warm up. Athletes Warm up. Singers Warm up. Visual Journalists also need to warm up. We need to get the blood flowing and slowly access our inner selves. Stretch out your hands and fingers. The aim is to work as quickly as possible. No thinking. You will see what happens when you layer different materials. Be like scientists, not artist's- this is just research. You should be quite satisfied if this looks like a complete mess when you are done. It's time to give it up: your control issues, neatness, organization, desire to do well, impress others, even your own critic. We are pushing the parameters of all we know. We want to get to the other side: we seek that which is unknown. We don't have time to worry about making art. We are after something meatier. As a matter of fact, we should feel quite successful if these are horrible, ugly and make us uncomfortable. We'll know we're headed in the right direction. This warm up assignment is designed to loosen us up and it is my signature exercise that I do in all my live workshops, also known as the Shadowy



SPECIAL INSTRUCTION

Mist. You could do this assignment everyday and always come up with something new. It's a great way to get started: to get your hand to the page and not try to direct the outcome but rather see where it goes. This is my famous Mixed Media Warm up and it will stretch you, push you and also to get you to work in layers. You will be on a need to know basis only. If you are frustrated- good. Aggravated-I'm pleased to hear it. Uncertain- thank God. Feeling rushed and unprepared- you've got it now. Just keep going, especially if you feel resistance- just try it- even if it goes against every ounce of your being. Realize nothing is too precious. Don't worry about the outcome-stay focused on the process. Get your timer.

BEGIN HERE: Be completely ready with all your supplies and everything you need before starting. I'll wait. Do not read this first and then do it. Do not read ahead. Stay with each step of the process. Allow yourself to be in the unknown. Do not say you get it and skip any step. There is a separate audio file with just this exercise. You can copy it to CD and then play it and stop it where you need to and resume when your time limit is up. Let's go!

Set your timer for five minutes: **GO.** Aiming for background texture, completely cover both pages with paint. This is not a painting, just background. Don't bother with that little brush, get out your big brush. You don't have time for the big brush. Get out your roller. You don't have time for that big roller, just squirt it on the page and squeegee it across with your hand, a credit card, or a scrap of paper. Come on, hurry up, you should be done all ready. **STOP.** For this next part you will randomly grab 5 images from a magazine (**shiny or glossy paper- not newsprint or absorbent paper**) that appeal to you. You don't have time to plan- just rip, tear, or cut



and glue down. You don't care what these images look like. It can be textures, colors, pictures, anything. You are not attached. You are not making a picture. Do not leisurely look through your magazine for the perfect images, cut out all five, and then glue them down in a pleasing manner. If the timer goes off and you don't have anything glued down, you will have to go on to the next step. Do not hesitate. When we are done with a section, we are done. Do not try to finish it after the timer goes off. What, exactly, are you finishing? It doesn't matter. This will cause frustration. It is hard to do, leave tasks unfinished or unperfected or not right. But Stop anyway and move on. Keep moving and letting it go. After all, you have no idea what you are doing or why, so what is there to finish? I recommend glue stick for this, but you can use any kind of glue, paste or medium you are comfortable with, but it needs to dry quickly. Set your timer for five minutes. **GO.** Cut or tear and glue five non glossy pictures from a magazine. **STOP.** Next add 5 collage non-glossy items from your collage stash. Any kind of matte or absorbent paper. Just grab and glue- no planning- set your timer for 5 minutes. **GO.** Next add pencil marks with a graphite pencil. Experiment with shading- how dark can you get, how light. How many different lines can you make, how hard, how soft. You can draw around some of your collage items. You can make dark backgrounds. Experiment. Set your timer for five minutes, **GO.** Taking as much or as little time for this next part as you would like, mess around with drawing marks using a water color crayon. Pick only one color. Just marks. Then with your water color crayon make at least one heavy handed small area that is all colored in, and one very light. Next add water to *some* of your water color crayon marks. You can use a brush or even try a baby wipe. See what happens. You can use a very skinny thin brush and see what it looks like to make thin lines through it. Just experiment. For this next part don't spend too much time on it but you don't need to time yourself. Print a repeating pattern with rubber stamps and stamp pads (use a permanent pad that won't smudge such as Staz On). Think wall paper or wrapping paper. **Do not print the pattern everywhere, be selective.** Try a small area here and there, but repeat the pattern consistently, like wallpaper, keeping your printed shapes pretty close together.

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The "Mixed Media Warm-Up" videos are presented in three parts.

- 1.) "Set up" (this is the section you just completed until this stage). You don't really need the video to do this section. The PDF or audio file is pretty self explanatory.
- 2.) "Shadowy Mist," is the section you are about to embark on. I recommend viewing the video first because this is not an easy step.
- 3.) "Reconciliation." this video documents the last step of this warm up exercise where you will slow down and turn inward. There is nothing to watch in the sense that there is nothing to illustrate, no technique to learn or get down. It is a process that will be different for each person and each page you work on. It will never be or feel the same ever. It is a time of relying on your innate wisdom. You will see yourself in the journey these women make and especially interesting to you will be how they discuss their work. Developing this skill will be necessary as you leave the relative safety of the workshop and enter into your own practice. Self dialogue combined with objective viewing, as though outside yourself, will be integral to understanding your emerging signs and symbols.

(please see video "Shadowy Mist" and read instructions before just diving in on your own.)

2nd Stage: Creating the Shadowy Mist. Paint over the whole two page spread with cheap craft paints. I recommend these paints because they dry to a matte finish which will make it easier to work back on top of in our next section. They can be a little more opaque than higher quality acrylics, but you can always add a little white to your color. Use *only one color (this is not a painting)*, and try to pick a relatively opaque color. Working in small sections, wipe the paint with "Wet Ones" And continue painting and wiping, pushing and pulling. If it all looks the same color, it's muddy and you need a clean "Wet One." Don't let it get too wet or too soggy. Be quick. Don't rub all the same; some circular motion, some shoving in long strokes.

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Do not push the

paint back onto itself, shove it beyond your painted square. Just paint a small square and try to set it up in a grid like fashion. Be orderly. Do not try and paint the whole thing. Just work in small sections. When you are about a third of the way done, use a clean baby wipe to completely wipe off all the paint and make some of the images pop forward. It's a push and pull exercise. We push everything back and integrate it by softening it, then we pull some of the images back out. We don't manipulate the images by choosing which ones to pull forward, we let the imagery arrive on its own. Sound confusing? It is. See the video. And whether you get "it," or get it "right" won't matter. Whatever happens in the shadowy mist exercise will be perfect for our next section. It's a very subtle exercise, and you are not likely to get the hang of it on your first try.

RECONCILIATION

(Please see video for Section #3: Reconciliation: This is where we once again create something from nothing. From all these unrelated layers, we discover a story waiting to be told. This is where true expression occurs: it's past the point we know or understand. It only comes after we've worked the page. Hold your book out at a little distance. Looking down on our pages is one view, we need a new perspective. So hold it up. You can set it up on the table to get a little distance. Now visually enter your journal pages as if they were a room. Notice where are you most/least comfortable in this room? Respond to your inner knowing- even if you don't trust it, even if you don't like it. Is there something asking to be told? Look. Is it complete? Not is it good or finished, but have you arrived at some satisfaction- learned something new- saw yourself in a new way? Figure out how to reconcile your pages. It may need just one thing, or it may have to be painted over and started again. You may have to tear things off. Do you see something in there? Look. Look hard- you are looking for your true self among the ashes. The thing asking to be born up from the pages- some small voice that wants to try to speak no matter how silly, petty, ugly, hurtful, even just one word. **13** Consider what must be done. You may have to kill your favorite part-sacrifice

it for the whole. When you are done looking, put your books down and you can forget about everything all this ashes and sacrifice and story business. You don't need to worry about it anymore. What you have all ready done is accessed an inner voice. You have summoned her. She knows just what to do if you will let her. You have to help her out. You help her by playing. How do you get started? Not by thinking, but by starting. Mixed media is the bridge to the unconscious. So you start by touching your stuff. Not your pages, your materials and collage items. Touch everything. A voice will say, yes this, or no that. And five minutes later she might change her mind. Listen to her. I don't care if she says pink glitter glue and you don't think that is very sophisticated. You do as she instructs. This is how you let the page unfold. Stay with each step of the process. Do not visualize the outcome or what you think the picture should look like. You play around the page. How does this work? What if I add this? I had fun with that, maybe I'll try that again. And then continue to work on until at some point you feel done. That doesn't mean you like it and that doesn't mean you are finished. You will have this feeling that you are done. Title it, sign it, date it, and put wax paper in between your pages if they are not dry. Closing the book is a great ritual for closing your visual journaling session and knowing that all your inner thoughts and emotions are protected. You leave them with your book. You do not need to take them out into the world. They remain here until the next time you are ready.

SEE RECONCILIATION VIDEO

WORKING
IN THE
STUDIO



Sketchers

shadowy darkness all around us,
whispering softly in the breeze,

-SUMMARY CHAPTER 3-

Tasks:

- 1.) Set up studio/supplies/get new supplies
- 2.) Readjust JMU for indoor studio work
- 3.) Spend time with your book w/ongoing Book Preparation pg. 8

Check out Mixed Media Warm Up videos:

- #1- Set Up
- #2 - Shadowy Mist
- #3 - Reconciliation

Download Audio: Field Notes: "Chapter 6"

Tribal Council

- 1.) Return trip to the art store:
New Favorite Mixed Media Supplies and why,
see pg.7
- 2.) Ongoing Book Preparations pg. 8
- 3.) Share any part of the Warm Up exercise including all questions and difficulties.

Extreme Field

Notes:

**(See Final
Chapter)**

There is a chill in the air...

-15-

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With
Juliana Coles